

# WORRIES WE DO NOT HAVE

## U.S.A.'s "BLOOD-AND-THUNDER" PROBLEM IN RADIO—DEMAND FOR HIGHER ADVERTISING STANDARD.



**E**XPLOITATION of children through current "blood-and-thunder" radio programmes is denounced by Anning S. Prall, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, says the "Christian Science Monitor."

At the same time, radio advertising is included for the first time in the tightened restrictions of the new food and drug act pending before Congress, requiring a measure of responsibility for advertising statements carried into homes by ether waves.

With this impetus from two directions for a house-cleaning in radio advertising, the Federal Communications Commission is also preparing the way for the national conference in May at Washington, at which it will formulate plans for better co-operation between commercial broadcasters and non-profit organisations interested in lifting current radio standards.

The statement by Mr. Prall, made in a recent radio interview, is one of the most emphatic ever issued by an official in his responsible position. Without qualifications he stated he was "certain" that in some instances the new dime novels of the air were injuring children; and a minute later he warned that in the case of "persistent violators" of the standards of public service, the station licenses might not be renewed.

"As you know," he said in this connection, "about half a dozen stations have been taken off the air in recent years because of their failure to live up to proper standards of public service."

Mr. Prall's statement is believed to offer a powerful weapon for parents who are at present opposed to the dime novel radio programmes. They need only clip out the news item containing Mr. Prall's warning and send it to the local station broadcasting the objectionable programme. It is believed that the threat to discontinue the license, coming from the chairman of the commission, will do much to moderate the nuisance.

"While I believe that radio presents an unequalled opportunity for the new development of juvenile talent," Mr. Prall said, "I am not sure that it is entirely meeting its obligations with a regard to the effect it is having on the child mind of America."

"In some cases I am certain that it is having a deleterious effect because of some of the programmes that are being presented. I refer to the blood-and-thunder programmes so prevalent in the late afternoons. I am not condemning all of them, for I know many of them that are distinctly educational. I do condemn, however, those that can be compared to the dime novels of the 'Deadeye Dick' and 'Boy Smuggler' variety."

"It is my opinion that the radio people themselves

would do well to eliminate programmes that arouse the imaginations of children to the point where they can not eat or sleep."

While Mr. Prall was delivering himself of his opinion on this phase of the subject, Senator Royal S. Copeland (D), of New York, was introducing discussion of the new food and drugs bill in the Senate, which for the first time put radio advertising under the same federal surveillance as advertising in newspapers and magazines. This is only one phase of the pending bill, which is designed to modernise and extend the original Wiley Food and Drug Act passed 28 years ago.

"I may say about advertising," said Mr. Copeland in this connection, "and that applies not only to advertising in print but also to radio advertising, that responsibility is placed upon the manufacturer who supplies the copy or material."

At present, it is known that fraudulent and misleading advertising excluded from printed publications can be, and often is, given over the air.

For all our broadcasting worries, real and imaginary, in New Zealand, we may cross these two, at least, off the list.

## U.S.A. Radio Stations Warned Against Free Use of Recordings

**T**HREATENING drastic court action, if necessary, the American Society of Recording Artists recently requested the nation's 614 radio stations to discontinue broadcasting recordings of its artist members except under license to the society and royalty payments to the artists.

In a statement released by George H. Hall, managing director of the society, and mailed to the country's broadcasting stations, the organisation announced it "holds the 250,000 firms, corporations and individuals who have lent themselves to this practice equally responsible with the radio broadcasting stations for such unlicensed exploitation of talent."

Mr. Hall said the stations, their advertisers and sponsors, already owe to recording artists "whose talents they have exploited," more than 25,000,000 dollars.

The announcement stated broadcasters who obtain a license from the society by a certain date would be "released from all liability" for the use of talent of the artist members occurring prior to the time of the license date.

The society claims its membership includes the majority of the popular recording artists of the country, and its board of governors lists such well-known names as Eddie Cantor, Gene Austin, Ben Bernie, Don Bestor, Jack Denny, Morton Downey, Al Jolson, Ted Fiorito, Ted Lewis, and scores of motion picture stars and concert-opera celebrities.